



REVIEW OF THE WEEK OF JUNE 26TH 2006

MEET A BURNS STAFFER

NAME: *Erin Ballas*

POSITION:

Field Rep, Missoula

ISSUES:

Immigration, State Department, Foreign Affairs, Labor, Banking, Education

HOMETOWN:

Missoula

COLLEGE:

Univ. of Montana

HIGH SCHOOL:

Missoula and Hellgate High Schools

EDUCATION:

Bachelor's Degree (Major in Political Science, Minor in Soviet Studies)

MOST BEAUTIFUL

PLACE IN

MONTANA:

Flathead Lake and Glacier National Park

FIRST MET

CONRAD:

Juvenile Diabetes Research

Foundation meeting, Missoula, 2000

CAREER HISTORY:

Office Manager, FBB Architects, PC ('91-'00)

INTERESTING FACT:

Third generation Montanan

OP ED: Security Must Include the Northern and Southern Border *By Senator Burns, Published, Kalispell Daily Interlake, 6/25/06*

Not long after the recent heated immigration debate in the Senate, 17 suspects were arrested in Ontario, Canada for plotting a terrorist attack on the Canadian government. This was a reminder that we have not one, but two long foreign borders that need to be secured. Undoubtedly, our southern border with Mexico poses the larger challenge for shutting off illegal immigration while facilitating lawful commerce and cross border traffic. However, the long, porous, and often remote, stretch of border between Canada and the U.S. presents its own unique difficulties.

Our hi-line communities benefit from our shared border with Canada, as there are many families, businesses, farms and ranches divided along the border. We must ensure our borders are secure but do not cause an unnecessary burden for citizens in those communities who only wish to honestly travel or do business. But the current level of security at the northern border is inadequate. Our government employs over 9,600 border patrol agents, but only 1,000 guard the northern border.

We know all of these things. So what can we do about it? I believe we must utilize cutting-edge technology to provide needed surveillance for our 4,000 mile northern border, increase our manpower along the border where possible and economically feasible, and pursue a wise federal immigration policy.

We need to use the technology we have to secure the border, and develop even better ways to do this in the future. Much of this technology is being developed right here in Montana. Businesses in our state are developing advanced surveillance technology so that we can pinpoint exactly when and where someone is crossing the border illegally. Our universities are researching and developing ways to prevent and respond to a possible attack in the U.S., and are finding new information every day. I was also proud to work with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to establish the Northern Border Air Wing in Great Falls, which will be operational this August. Over the next ten weeks, DHS, through Customs and Border Protection (CBP), will hire 33 personnel and move assets in to place, including a Blackhawk helicopter, two 550 Cessna Interceptors and PC 12s (fixed wing aircraft). Once operational, the Northern Border Air Wing will provide a robust capability to respond quickly to a wide range of illicit activities and threats along the border.

Since the attacks of September 11, more than \$122 million in communications and monitoring technology has been deployed to the northern border. In addition, DHS has invested more than \$200 million on the cargo entry process, so that commercial vehicles and cargo are screened in a timely fashion. This allows the free flow of commerce across our northern border without sacrificing security.

With technology, we also need manpower. In the coming weeks, the Senate Appropriations Committee will consider funding for the U.S. Border Patrol and other programs within the Department of Homeland Security to strengthen our border patrol resources. In the short term, we are using the National Guard as a way to support our Border Patrol agents on the southern border. We must also plan for the long term, and that is why we must continue to increase the number of agents on both borders, to ensure the timely arrest of lawbreakers and add that extra layer of security for all of us here at home.

Finally, we must deliver sensible immigration reform after we have secured the border. I have said before that I believe the recently passed Senate version of the immigration bill is

LISTENING TO MONTANA

Do you feel Flag Burning should be outlawed in an amendment to the Constitution?

Yes No Not sure

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<http://burns.senate.gov/flagburning/>

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amnesty and repeats the mistakes of the 1986 immigration reform effort. Not only are these policies unfair to foreign citizens waiting in line for their chance to immigrate legally, but they are also unfair to the employers here in the United States, who sometimes pay thousands a year in fees and other costs to obtain a legal labor force. I support the efforts we've made in Congress to strengthen the border, by funding hundreds of miles of fence and car barrier in strategic locations, increasing the border patrol, and utilizing our resources like the National Guard. We must reform our immigration system to deliver the workforce many of our labor intensive industries require, but it must be a system which is orderly and legal.

I am pleased we have taken the southern border threat seriously in Congress, but we cannot forget about our expansive border to the north because our enemies will not forget either. Efforts here in Montana, including advanced technology and the Northern Border Air Wing, along with the responsible use of federal funding for high traffic areas and a sensible reform of our immigration system, will guarantee Americans the security they expect from the federal government.

Burns Includes Libby Language in Interior Bill *Directs EPA to Increase Cooperation with Libby Community*

On Thursday, June 29 Senator Burns announced the full Senate Appropriations Committee passed his Interior Appropriations bill, which includes language directing the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to work with the town of Libby to develop an acceptable timeline for completion of the Record of Decision (ROD). This language was inserted by Senator Burns at the request of the Libby community.

The ROD, according to the EPA website, is a "public document that explains which cleanup alternatives will be used to clean up a Superfund site." To date, members of the Libby community have raised concerns regarding the EPA's actions in Libby, highlighted by the recent discovery of asbestos at the Old Export Plant. Senator Burns has also heard from Libby residents about the need for increased community involvement, both through business opportunities as well as the progress and scientific methodology of the remediation. Recently, the EPA Regional Administrator responsible for Montana visited Libby and assured the community that their input would guide EPA's actions. Through inclusion of this language, Senator Burns expects the EPA to fulfill its commitments.

"I am deeply troubled by this situation in Libby and have been working to fix it, not just talk about it," said Senator Burns. "EPA needs to develop a timeline for the ROD, not continue delaying. This process needs to move forward in a spirit of cooperation with the community, so their concerns are addressed before the ink dries. We need to ensure Libby businesses are given a full and fair chance to compete for business opportunities there. This language provides greater community participation with the EPA."

Senator Burns discussed the issue with EPA Administrator Stephen Johnson Thursday afternoon as part of their ongoing dialogue about Libby.

Burns "Relieved" VA Laptop Recovered *Urges Vets to Remain Vigilant in Monitoring Personal Information*

On Thursday, June 29 Senator Burns expressed relief that the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has retrieved a laptop that was stolen in May 2006 and might have revealed sensitive personal information of millions of veterans:

"I am relieved about the recovery of the extremely valuable laptop. I remain hopeful that we can confirm that the information on my fellow veterans was not compromised. The FBI has said they have no evidence that the data has been accessed.

"This was an important wake-up call for all of our federal agencies. I am very disappointed and worried that this incident occurred in the first place. I will continue to push the VA and all federal agencies with access to personal information to take significant steps to protect that private data. I am pleased with the steps the VA has taken to aggressively respond to this incident. Going forward I urge my fellow veterans to remain vigilant and utilize the resources available to monitor their personal information."